

# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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*For Immediate Release*

**MARCH 3, 2005**

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on March 3, 2005, **VON A. EASLEY**, age 38, of 1400 N. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, Illinois, was sentenced to a total of forty-eight (48) months in prison following his plea and conviction on seven-counts of Causing Fraudulent Claims for Tax Refunds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 287.

As part of the plea, Von A. Easley admitted that he recruited low-income unsophisticated individuals who were willing to give their social security numbers to be used for the preparation and filing of false claims for refund. Von A. Easley then created false Forms W-2 and false addresses for "taxpayer" participants in the scheme. Von A. Easley sought the individual participants to obtain a tax refund anticipation loan based on the tax returns that falsified the W-2 tax withholding information and then received an amount from the refund anticipation loan from taxpayer participants. The Kansas City Fraud Detection Center identified forty-one Forms W-2 and 1040 which had similarities based on the same amounts of federal withholding and wages. All of the violations took place in 2002 in Jackson County, Illinois.

*If you suspect or know of an individual or company that is not complying with the tax laws, report this activity. Reports of suspected tax fraud can be made by phone, mail or your local IRS walk-in office. By phone you can contact the IRS toll free at **1-800-829-0433**.*

The prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations. The Internal Revenue Service has a Questionable Refund Program designed to identify fraudulent returns, to stop the payment of fraudulent refunds, and to refer identified fraudulent refund schemes for criminal investigation and prosecution. The prosecution of the case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman R. Smith.